

THE SECRET DOCTRINE

&

HOW TO INTERPRET THE TAO TE KING

followed by the history & ideas of Mencius and Chwang Tzu (Master Zhuang)

SD I XXV: Writings like the Tao Te King by Lao-tse are incomprehensible without commentaries:

He is said to have written 930 books on Ethics and religions, and seventy on magic, one thousand in all. His great work, however, the heart of his doctrine, the “Tao-te-King,” or the sacred scriptures of the Taosse, has in it, as Stanislas Julien shows, only “about 5,000 words” (Tao-te-King, p. xxvii.), hardly a dozen of pages, yet Professor Max Müller finds that “the text is unintelligible without commentaries, so that Mr. Julien had to consult more than sixty commentators for the purpose of his translation,” the earliest going back as far as the year 163 B.C., not earlier, as we see.

(Julien did the first translation into a European Language – French, of which there is no English translation, my research. from Google.)

<http://www.taoistic.com/taoteching-laotzu/taoteching-literature.htm>

Carrying on from the SD:

During the four centuries and a half that preceded this earliest of the commentators there was ample time to veil the true Lao-tse doctrine from all but his initiated priests. The Japanese, among whom are now to be found the most learned of the priests and followers of Lao-tse, simply laugh at the blunders and hypotheses of the European Chinese scholars; and tradition affirms that the commentaries to which our Western Sinologues have access are not the real occult records, but intentional veils, and that the true commentaries, as well as almost all the texts, have long since disappeared from the eyes of the profane.

ANCIENT LANDMARKS

XII

MENCIUS

**Principal interpreter of Confucianism,
reputably a pupil of Confucius' grandson, Zisi.**

b. 372 d. 289 BC, 83 yrs



THE period immediately following the era of Lao Tzu and Confucius is of special interest to the student of Theosophy. An hundred schools and a thousand sects sprang into existence – a few antagonistic to both, a few true to their teachings, and many playing and profiting with their names and sayings. We do not propose to deal with the first and the third. Our task is to point at the landmarks of the Wisdom-Religion and so we must now turn to the labours of those who carried on the work of the two great men.

Schisms arose as between the early apostles after the passing of Jesus. Mencius on the one hand, Lieh Tzu and Chwang Tzu on the other. If they and their immediate admirers had remained loyal to the Original Impulse which manifested in the works of Lao Tzu and Confucius they would have prepared the mind of their race to be fecundated by the philosophy of the Great Buddha himself which was presently to energize and build a spiritual structure in China. But the schisms produced sects, as they always do; and when in the first century of the Christian era Buddhism reached China, the mind of the people was not ready; and those who received it themselves became a sect.

Three important names emerge – Mencius, Lieh Tzu, and Chwang Tzu. After them came degradation and corruption. In the sayings of these three the Theosophic influence of the two Sages is felt, but with 275 B.C. the force spent itself; there was hardly any in the public world to keep it focalized in his own life or school. Ambition for personal power and gain made the channels impure and unfit. Then arose temples and priests with ceremonies according to Confucius, in letter but contrary to the spirit; also the lower forms of magic and mediumism and psychical practices which were called the manifestations of Tao, but were as far away from the Tao of the great Classic as the Christian Churches are from the Sermon on the Mount or the psychism of Neo-Theosophy is from the Wisdom of the pure Theosophy of H.P.B.

These three, Mencius, Lieh Tzu and Chwang Tzu, may be correctly described as influences prevailing at a descending cycle of ancient China.

Mencius was a contemporary of Plato and utilized Confucian teachings to build an ideal state as Plato attempted in his *Republic*. Mencius moved from court to court in search of opportunities for the practical application of his political ideas and theories. But even in political doctrines the paradox was maintained, for Mencius preached in the same breath divine right of kings and democracy. He was more emphatic than Confucius himself in reference to the heaven-appointed sovereign, but he made it amply clear that people got as ruler what they deserved. He quotes as the Great Declaration -- "Heaven sees according as the people see; Heaven hears according as the people hear." (p. 357). Therefore "the people are the most important element in a nation; the spirits of the land and the grain are the next; the sovereign is the lightest." (p. 483). Mencius went so far as to advocate revolt against

an unworthy sovereign -- raise a standard not of rebellion but of righteousness. He advises looking for the minister of Heaven when the sovereign has become worthless and useless; for, "it is not enough to remonstrate with a sovereign on account of the mal-employment of his ministers. Once rectify the prince and the kingdom will be firmly settled." (p. 310). Material well-being of the people was his one aim, and therefore he preaches that the state should supply the twofold nourishment, for body and mind, hence he recommends agriculture and education as of first rate importance.

The way of the people is this: if they have a certain livelihood, they will have a fixed heart; if not they will not have a fixed heart, and then there is nothing which they will not do in the way of self-abandonment, of moral deflection, of depravity, and of wild license. When they have thus been involved in crime, to follow them up and punish them -- this is to entrap the people. How can such an entrapping be done under the rule of a benevolent man? (pp. 239-240.)

Establish *hsiang*, *hsu*, *hsio*, *hsiao* -- all those educational institutions -- for the instruction of the people. The object of them all is to illustrate the human relations. When those are illustrated by superiors, kindly feeling will prevail among the inferior people below. (p. 242.)

The minister of agriculture taught the people to sow and reap, cultivating the five kinds of grain. Thus the people obtained a subsistence. But men possess a moral nature; and if they are well fed, warmly clad, and comfortably lodged, without being taught at the same time, they become almost like the beasts. This was a subject of anxious solicitude to the Sage Shun and he appointed Hsieh to be the Minister of Instruction, to teach the relations of humanity: -- how between father and son there should be affection; between sovereign and minister righteousness; between husband and wife attention to their separate functions; between old and young a proper order; and between friends fidelity. "Encourage them; lead them on; rectify them; straighten them; help them; give them wings; -- thus causing them to become possessors of themselves. Then follow this up by stimulating them, and conferring benefits on them." (pp. 251-2). Good government does not lay hold of the people so much as good instructions. Good government is feared by the people, while good instructions are loved by them. Good government gets the people's wealth, while good instructions get their hearts. (pp. 455-56.)

Extracts courtesy of <http://www.wisdomworld.org/additional/ancientlandmarks/Mencius.html>

ANCIENT LANDMARKS

XIV

CHWANG TZU (Master Zhuang)

also known as Zhuangzi, Chuang Chou & Zhuang Zhou

Influential philosopher, admirer of Lao Tzu; the *Chuang-tzu* attributed to him.

b. 369 d. 286 BC, 83 yrs



LAO TZU is austere and serene; Confucius is the ritualist in life; but now we approach Chwang Tzu -- the breaker of idols, the advocate not only of serene but of joyous living. Regarding Lao Tzu as his Master, he practised the austerities of the straight and narrow path of Tao; but unlike his great

predecessor he was an active propagandist and labored incessantly to teach so that many may live the higher life.

His title "The True Man of Nan-Hua" shows the deep reverence in which he is held by the Chinese. His writings are known as "The Divine Classic of Nan Hua." Nan Hua was his birth place, and living in the fourth century B.C. he was a contemporary of Mencius. His poet soul gives his writing the graceful touch so pleasing to his students, the touch that produces a sparkling quality of pure joy, non-sensuous, and on contacting it, argument and even reason subside into silence. The wealth of illustrations in innumerable anecdotes and episodes does not make the reiteration of his principles boring but on the contrary it continuously enlightens the varied aspects of those fundamentals. A celebrated commentator of the Second Century, B.C., says, "His teachings were like an overwhelming flood, which spreads at its own sweet will." His thirty-three books are generally classified thus: I to VII the esoteric, VIII to XXII the exoteric, and XXIII to XXXIII miscellaneous. Thus Chwang Tzu is a voluminous writer and where Lao Tzu would speak a terse but telling aphorism, he narrates an anecdote and adorns it with imagery.

A great change came over the world of thought after the passing of Lao Tzu. The influence of the great Buddha was steadily permeating all Asia and Chwang Tzu distinctly shows the impress of this influence on his consciousness. In the period between the death of Lao Tzu and the birth of Chwang Tzu both the Buddha and Sankar Acharya had resuscitated Theosophy, and the echoes of Their teachings unmistakably resound in those of Chwang Tzu; this accounts for the more detailed development of Lao Tzu's teachings and the becoming exoteric of that which was esoteric previously. Because of this, his Tao *appears* different from the Tao of Lao Tzu; but in reality the introduction of the expression Tien Tao, the Divine Way or the Heavenly Way, was formulated by Chwang Tzu as a protest against the degradation in which the Lao Tzu's doctrine of Spontaneity was falling. Some pseudo-Taoists were preaching, and indulging in the belief that lust can be killed out if gratified, and spontaneity consisted in free indulgence. To emphasize the ethical aspect without discarding the metaphysical, Chwang Tzu spoke of Tien Tao and Tao; but these two like the Macro- and the Micro-Cosmos are related in identity. With this short introduction, we will let Chwang Tzu speak his own words on the different topics of interest to the student of Theosophy.

DEITY AND NATURE:

The ultimate end is the Heavenly Tao. It is manifested in the laws of nature. It is the hidden spring. At the beginning, It was. This, however, is inexplicable. It is unknowable. But from the unknowable we reach the known.

We are embraced in the obliterating unity of the Heavenly Tao. There is perfect adaptation to whatever may eventuate; and so we complete our allotted span. But what is it to be embraced in the obliterating unity of the Heavenly Tao? Take no heed of time, nor right and wrong. But passing into the realm of the Infinite, take your final rest therein.

Knowledge of the great ONE, of the great Negative, of the great Nomenclature, of the great Uniformity, of the great Space, of the great Truth, of the great Law -- this is perfection. The great ONE is omnipresent. The great Negative is omnipotent. The great Nomenclature is all-inclusive. The great Uniformity is all-assimilative. The great Space is all receptive. The great Truth is all-exacting. The great Law is all-binding.